



# Community Connections

Volume 9 Number 1

A Newsletter of the Talbot County Department of Social Services

March 2008

## April Sharp is Director of Talbot County Department of Social Services

Sharon Harrington fills  
Assistant Director Position



DHR recently announced the appointment of April Sharp as Director of Talbot County Department of Social Services. April had been

serving as Acting Director since April 1, 2007, after Cathy Mols, Director of Talbot County DSS for ten years, moved to the Social Services Administration to begin her new role as Executive Director.

April has been with DSS in various capacities for over 29 years, 20 of which have included administrative and programmatic responsibility in Adult Services, Child Welfare, and Family Investment programs. April's appointment left vacant the Assistant Director for Child Welfare and Workforce position, which has been filled by Sharon Harrington. For more information, see page 4.

## Governor O'Malley Announces Foster Parent Recruitment Campaign "1000 by 10"

State Sets Goal to Gain 1,000 Foster Homes by 2010

On January 17, 2008, Governor Martin O'Malley, joined by Lieutenant Governor Anthony Brown and Department of Human Resources Secretary Brenda Donald, launched *1,000 by 10*, the new state-wide initiative to recruit and retain foster parents in Maryland. The goal of the campaign is to gain 1,000 foster homes in the state by the year 2010.

In the last five years, the number of Maryland foster parents has decreased by more than a thousand. Governor O'Malley said his Administration is committed to reversing that trend.

"Our state must become a national leader for protecting vulnerable children, and we can help provide safety and brighter futures for our youth by ensuring that we have plenty

of good foster families," said Governor O'Malley.

A focus of the campaign is to connect with leaders of the Maryland business community and other organizations. "We will engage businesses, nonprofit organizations, faith organizations and other groups around this issue," said Secretary Donald. "We need organizations to make information readily available to

## Talbot County DSS Sets Goal to Gain 9 Foster Homes in Talbot County

While the state plan calls for Talbot County to gain three homes by 2010, the Department has set its growth goal at nine. Talbot County currently has 15 available resource homes.

The Department has developed local and regional task forces to address this issue. Recruitment strategies planned or already taking place include newspaper, radio and television ads and feature stories, movie advertisements, messages on business marquees, appreciation events, and information rack cards at local businesses and agencies.



At the January 17 kick-off of the "1,000 by 10" foster care recruitment campaign are, from left to right: Dina Daly, Director, Caroline County DSS, Gov. O'Malley, Cheryl Krebeck, Talbot County Foster Parent, April Sharp, Director, Talbot County DSS, Tara Larabay, Dorchester County DSS

### FOSTER CARE PROGRAM *A Home for Every Child*

Talbot County Department of Social Services  
410-770-4848  
P.O. Box 1479  
301 Bay Street, Unit #5  
Easton, MD 21601  
[www.dhr.state.md.us/talbot.htm](http://www.dhr.state.md.us/talbot.htm)

## "1000 by 10"

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their employees, and to support foster parenting in the workplace by hosting workshops and information sessions on the topic and by providing supports such as flexible work hours for employees who become foster parents."

**"Our state must become a national leader for protecting vulnerable children, and we can help provide safety and brighter futures for our youth by ensuring that we have plenty of good foster families"**

Governor O'Malley

Maryland is committed to giving foster parents the resources they need to serve children. These resources include a recent increase in the monthly stipend foster parents receive, training, childcare assistance, and respite care.

"There are many reasons for people to consider foster parenting," commented Lieutenant Governor Brown. "When we strengthen our children, we strengthen our communities, our towns, our counties and our state. Governor O'Malley and I are committed to working with Secretary Donald and her staff, the Maryland Foster Parents Association, the various businesses and non-profit communities. We will all benefit from the success of 1000 by 10."

## "Foster Care Holiday Event"

Talbot Foster Families Celebrate at Holiday Party

Over 100 children representing families involved with foster care in Caroline, Dorchester and Talbot counties recently gathered at the Easton Fire Department for the region's annual Foster Care Holiday Party. Among the activities included were a holiday meal, catered by Island Beef & BBQ, a Santa's workshop where children selected gifts for their families, holiday crafts, face painting, dancing with DJ Mark Savage, and a visit from Santa. The Salvation Army provided a gift for every child who attended the event. Volunteers from Salisbury University's Social Work program assisted with the activities of the day.

There is currently a shortage of foster



care parents on the Mid Shore. For further information about opening your heart and home to a child and becoming a foster or adoptive parent, call 1-877-5FOSTER or Talbot County Department of Social Services at 410-770-4848. Have a heart: Be a foster or adoptive parent.

*Pictured with Santa is Cheyenne Hudkins of Trappe.*



*Pictured left to right are members of the Talbot County Department of Social Services Advisory Board who helped with the Holiday Event: Joanne Vaughn, Walda Dupriest-Brandt, April Sharp, Director of Talbot County Department of Social Services, Jim Slattery, Chairman of the Advisory Board, and Della Andrew. The Advisory Board supports the mission of the Department through advocacy, commu-*

## Interested in learning more about becoming a foster parent?

Attend the next Informational meeting to learn more about the licensing process.

Wednesday, March 26  
6:00 to 7:30 pm  
Crossroads Community, Inc.  
102 Banjo Lane  
Centreville

Can't make it?

Informational meetings are scheduled on a regular basis throughout the Mid-shore Region. For information about these meetings or foster care in general, call Talbot County DSS at 410-770-4848 or 1-877-5Foster.



## Place Matters

*Nothing matters more to a child than a place to call home*



# Fatherhood Programs in Talbot County

Talbot County DSS offers several programs for fathers



Talbot County is fortunate to be one of five jurisdictions in the state of Maryland to offer a number of programs for fathers and non-custodial parents to enable them to overcome barriers that prevent them from being an active and productive parent for their children. Through these programs, parents become knowledgeable of, and active in, day-to-day child rearing activities and become financially responsible for their well-being of their children.

## Responsible Father's/Young Father's Program

The Responsible Father's/Young Father's Program works with young, unmarried fathers or expectant fathers who are likely to become, or are currently involved with, the State's service support system. The goal of this program is to provide educational and employment opportunities and emotional support, creating the potential for fathers to play a positive role in their children's lives. This program offers assistance with issues of substance abuse, physical and mental health, family dysfunction and family neglect through referrals to appropriate agencies.

Responsible Fathers/Young Fathers began in 1992. There are four components designed to meet the various needs of this population.

### Non-Custodial Parents Employment Program (NPEP)

NPEP is a vehicle to assist parents with employment readiness and employment search. The NPEP component's focus is for parents to become gainfully employed in order to meet child support obligations. NPEP uses existing community resources for employment skills training and job placement opportunities.

### Providing On-going Parent Support Program (POPS)

POPS is designed to eliminate barriers that prevent parents from obtaining educational and employment opportunities which inhibit parents from financially and emotionally providing for their children. This component of the program assists parents

with issues that prevent them from providing a stable home environment and encourages them to accept their role as parents in the development of their children.

### Dads All Deserve Support Program (DADS)

Long Distance DADS utilizes a nationally recognized curriculum designed to be used with incarcerated individuals who are parents. This component assists inmates at Talbot County's Detention Center in prepar-



*Tom Wardrop, Outreach Worker, Winning Fathers Project (I) and Dawn Coleman, Young Father's Program Coordinator.*

ing for reintegration into the community. DADS uses the Dependable Strengths Articulation Process to teach employment readiness and employment search skills.

### Responsible Males Program

Responsible Males is the prevention component of the program. Services are provided at local middle-schools for young men "at risk" of becoming fathers. Responsible Males is structured as a support group and focuses on anger management, self-esteem, decision making, and responsible sexual behavior.

## The Winning Fathers Project

The Winning Fathers Project serves fathers who are within six months of release from incarceration or under criminal justice supervision and their families. Services include healthy marriage and relationship education, relationship counseling, parenting skills, and job training to enable fathers to meet the needs of their families. Talbot County is one of five sites in the state of Maryland to offer this pilot program, now in its second year.

Winning Fathers enables incarcerated fathers who are preparing to re-enter the community and those recently released and their families to develop their ability to resolve conflict, develop healthy relationships in their home and community, advance the overall well-

being of children in the household and improve the family's economic stability. By addressing the challenges faced by incarcerated and recently released fathers and their families, Winning Fathers' long-term benefits include reduced risk of re-incarceration, enhanced family economic stability, increased potential for economic growth, improved well-being of the children in the household and stronger families and communities.

Winning Fathers is strictly a volunteer program and is free for eligible fathers.

## Lorraine Johnson Receives DHR Customer Service Excellence Award

Talbot County DSS worker Lorraine Johnson received the 2007 DHR Customer Service Excellence Award at the annual Maryland Department of Human Resources ceremony. This award is given to select DHR staff members



throughout the state who consistently demonstrate exemplary customer service.

Lorraine has been employed with TCDSS for nine years and works in Income Support. She is committed to providing the highest quality of service to our customers.

Lorraine earned her Associate of Arts Degree at Harford Community College and her Bachelor of Science Degree at Salisbury University. She was featured in Maryland African American Pride Magazine in their Winter 2008 issue.



### Dear Missing Link:

What is the Customer Call Center?

### Curious Customer

### Dear Curious Customer:

The Customer Call Center, established on February 21, 2001, is a state-wide, state-of-the-art, automated call

Questions  
about  
your child support case?  
child support services?

Call the  
Customer Call Center  
1-800-332-6347

8:00 am to 5:00 pm  
Monday thru Friday

Have some spare time  
on *your* hands?  
Become a volunteer!

Let us match  
*your interests  
and talents*  
to our volunteer needs:

*Scrapbooking*  
*Budgeting*  
*Cooking*  
*Computers*  
*Listening*  
*Encouraging*  
*Teaching*  
*Research*  
*Event Support*

For information contact:  
**Pat Murphy**  
Volunteer Coordinator  
**410-770-4958**

center designed to ensure better customer access to child support services. The Call Center provides child support customers with fast and accurate answers to their questions. The nationwide toll-free number is 1-800-332-6347. The Call Center is open from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and allows for calls to be completed in English or Spanish.

When customers call the center, they are connected to a customer service representative who will be able to answer basic questions pertaining to their case. Any questions that cannot be resolved by the call center staff are forwarded to the local office that same day.

The Call Center enables the Department to handle an increased call volume, reduce caller wait time, provide additional customer service representatives, and enhance the delivery of quality service to our customers..

## Sharon Harrington Named Assistant Director for Child Welfare and Workforce Support

Sharon Harrington, LCSW-C, has been named Assistant Director for Child Welfare and Workforce Support, filling the position left vacant by the appointment of April Sharp to Director.



Most recently, Sharon was the Clinical Director at the Center for Addiction Medicine in Baltimore. Prior to that, she worked at Johns Hopkins Hospital, Program for Alcoholism and other Drug Dependencies.

Sharon is a Talbot County native, returning to the Shore after an absence of 18 years. She received her undergraduate degree from Salisbury University and her Master's from University of Maryland at Baltimore.



## Community Connections

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